



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU REMINDS ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS OF THEIR OBLIGATION TO ELIMINATE DUPLICATIVE LIFELINE SUPPORT

WC Docket Nos. 11-42, 03-109, 12-23 and CC Docket No. 96-45

In this public notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) provides guidance to Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) and state administrators regarding compliance with the one-per-household rule adopted in the *Lifeline Reform Order*, and reminds ETCs of their ongoing duty to prevent and eliminate duplicative support.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Lifeline Reform Order*, the Commission codified a rule that eligible consumers can only receive one Lifeline-supported service per household.<sup>2</sup> To comply with the one-per-household rule, each ETC has an ongoing duty to ensure that it provides support to only one subscriber per household.<sup>3</sup> An ETC may not serve more than one person at an address without obtaining the required certifications.<sup>4</sup>

Consistent with the one-per-household rule, once an ETC determines through an examination of its records that it is providing Lifeline supported service to multiple subscribers at a single address, the ETC must provide each subscriber at that address with a one-per-household worksheet. The ETC must also inform the subscriber that he or she has 30 days to respond and provide the requested information, or the subscriber will be de-enrolled.<sup>5</sup> The ETC must de-enroll a subscriber that fails to attest that the subscriber is a member of a separate household at the address or fails to return the one-per-household worksheet.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, if a prospective subscriber seeks to obtain service at an address where the ETC is already serving a subscriber, the prospective subscriber must attest that it is part of a separate household, prior to the ETC providing Lifeline service to the new subscriber.<sup>7</sup> ETCs which have failed to take the

<sup>1</sup> See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Dkt. Nos. 11-42 *et al.*, CC Dkt. No. 96-45, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 27 FCC Rcd 6656 (2012) (*Lifeline Reform Order* or *Order*).

<sup>2</sup> See *id.*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6689, para. 74. The one-per-household rule is codified at 47 C.F.R. § 54.409(c). See 47 C.F.R. § 54.409(c). This rule became effective June 1. See *Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6859-60, para. 515; 77 FR 12952 (March 2, 2012), *corrected by* 77 FR 19125 (Mar. 30, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> See *Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6691, para. 78 (stating that an ETC must “search its own internal records to ensure that it does not already provide Lifeline-supported service to someone at that residential address”).

<sup>4</sup> See *id.*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6719, para. 140.

<sup>5</sup> See *id.*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6720, para. 143 (noting that an ETC must provide 30 days notice to a subscriber prior to de-enrollment if the ETC has reason to believe that that subscriber is no longer eligible for Lifeline).

<sup>6</sup> See *id.*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6690-91, para. 77; 47 C.F.R. § 54.405(e)(1). The one-per-household worksheet can be found at [http://www.usac.org/\\_res/documents/li/doc/Lifeline-household-worksheet.docx](http://www.usac.org/_res/documents/li/doc/Lifeline-household-worksheet.docx).

necessary steps to prevent and eliminate intra-company duplicates may be subject to administrative action by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) and/or enforcement action by the Commission.<sup>8</sup>

For further information, please contact Jonathan Lechter, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-1442 or TTY (202) 418-0484.

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<sup>7</sup> See *Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6691, para. 78. Subscribers must provide a certification at sign up and as part of the recertification process (for those subscribers whose eligibility is not recertified through a database) that the subscriber is compliant with the one-per-household rule. See 47 C.F.R. § 54.410(d)(3); 47 C.F.R. § 54.410(f)(2)(iii); (f)(3)(iii).

<sup>8</sup> The Bureau expects that the ETCs' subscriber information transmitted to USAC to begin the National Lifeline Accountability Database "scrubbing process" will be free of intra-company duplicates. See *Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6749, para. 215 ("The scrubbing process should begin once the Bureau approves USAC's plan and ETCs have provided their existing subscriber lists and accompanying data to either USAC or the database").